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PARAMOUNT

THE MOORE

HISTORIC THEATRES

LEGENDARY PERFORMANCES

PRESS RELEASE

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SANKOFA THEATRE: A MAAFA EXPERIENCE AT SEATTLE'S MOORE THEATRE JULY 24 - 27, 2003

Emotional drama explores Africa and Africans in America during and beyond the Middle Passage

Seattle, WA -- “Indescribable,” “intense,” and “gripping” were only a few ways that Moore Theatre patrons described the last two presentations of the *Maafa Suite*. A commemoration of the Maafa returns to Seattle’s Moore Theatre July 24 – 27 — and along with it, an opportunity to understand the roots of racism in America. Tickets will go on sale Friday, June 6 and will range from \$14.00 - \$20.00. There will also be a “Pay What You Can” performance on opening night, July 24.

For the past two years, The Moore Theatre has been home to the *Maafa Suite*, a dramatic representation that commemorates Africans lost during the Middle Passage or Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Maafa is a Ki-Swahili word that means tragedy, great catastrophe, disaster, holocaust, and is a term introduced into contemporary scholarship by Dr. Marimba Ani, to provide a specific African American relationship to this period in world history. For the past two years, the St. Paul Community Baptist Church, from Brooklyn, New York, has presented the *Maafa Suite* in Seattle.

Inspired by the *Maafa Suite*, *Sankofa Theatre - A Maafa Experience* is a locally created, produced and performed commemoration of the experiences, trials and triumphs of Africans who were captured and enslaved. *Sankofa Theatre* is produced by Vivian Phillips, written by Justin and Gabe Emeka, and directed by Justin Emeka. Guest choreographers Jamel Gaines and Lakai Worrell, of Creative Outlet Dance Company (Brooklyn, NY), will join local artists. Seattleite Craig Williams is the director of choreography, and the *Iintombi Zilapha* (The Girls are Here) Dancers from South Africa will be featured along with Etienne Cakpo from Benin, Africa. The entire performance ensemble (performers, dancers, choir and musicians) will number approximately 65 Seattle and visiting artists.

Presented in partnership with The Seattle Theatre Group, the Maafa Commemoration will include a series of lectures, discussions, and other events to encourage a dialogue on race, reconciliation, and healing in the Seattle community. Included are mini presentations during local Juneteenth celebrations, a showing of Haile Gerima’s movie *Sankofa*, and a community learning event that will feature a panel discussion focused on increasing understanding of the effects of slavery and racism.

Sankofa Theatre - A Maafa Experience July 24 @ 7 p.m., July 25 @ 11 a.m. and 8 p.m., and July 27 @ 4 p.m. at The Moore Theatre. Tickets go on-sale Friday, June 6, at all Ticketmaster outlets, by calling 206-292-ARTS (2787), at The Paramount Box office, or on-line at www.themoore.com. Tickets range from \$14.00 - \$20.00. There will also be a “Pay What You Can” performance on opening night, July 24. *Sankofa Theatre - A Maafa Experience* is proudly supported in part by US Bank, The Cultural Development Authority of King County, Seattle Office for Civil Rights, and STG.

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A NON-PROFIT PERFORMING ARTS ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO OPERATING AND PRESERVING

THE HISTORIC PARAMOUNT AND MOORE THEATRES

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